

VTrans PDD Right of Way

Annual Report January 2014

The **Right of Way Section** is comprised of the Acquisition Units (Plans and Title, Appraisal and Acquisition), Utilities and Permits Unit and Survey Unit.

The **Acquisition Units** are responsible for the acquisition of real property needed for transportation projects. This process includes title abstracting and property owner contacts, preparation of right-of-way plans showing what property is needed, appraisal of the property needed, preparation of legal documents, negotiation with the affected property owners, relocation of displaced families and businesses to suitable replacement housing or facilities, coordinating the eminent domain process, and coordinating the property management activities such as building sales or demolition. Other functions include court liaison support for compensation appeals, the sale and lease of surplus highway right-of-way, maintaining the existing right-of-way inventory, and researching and providing right-of-way information.

The **Utilities and Permits** Unit performs all liaison and negotiation between utility companies and the Agency necessary to ensure conflicting utility facilities are relocated as part of transportation projects. The other function of this unit is the review and issuance of permits of a commercial nature for all work performed within Agency-owned rights of way. This includes the installation and maintenance of utility facilities and the construction and maintenance of commercial accesses to property adjacent to the rights of way. This unit is the Central Files location for all Agency issued permits under 19 VSA 1111.

The **Survey** Unit provides survey data for Agency roadway and bridge improvement projects and other in-house survey needs. The survey unit conducts research and documentation of historic rights-of-way and performs other special surveys. Geodetic Survey establishes precise geographic reference positions for use in coordinating VTrans projects, cooperates with the national Geodetic Survey's Geodetic Advisor to promote the use of modern coordinate systems in Vermont, advances state-of-the-art technology such as the Global Positioning System and maintains an automated repository for geodetic control data.



Highlights of the Year

This year Vermont hosted the **2013 Northeast Regional Right of Way & Utility Conference**, which had not taken place since 1997. The 3-day conference took place in May at the beautiful Woodstock Inn and Resort. Attendance was very good with five northeast states being represented as well as FHWA, consultants, organizations and utility companies.

The event included many breakout sessions to include discussions on relocation assistance, Buy America, Every Day Counts, property management, appraisal and appraisal review as well as others. Connecticut DOT staff put on an outstanding session on business relocation and the International Right of Way Association not only sponsored the conference but also spoke to attendees regarding their organization during one of our lunches and incorporated some games as entertainment.

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Team members and Vermont Division Office attendees.

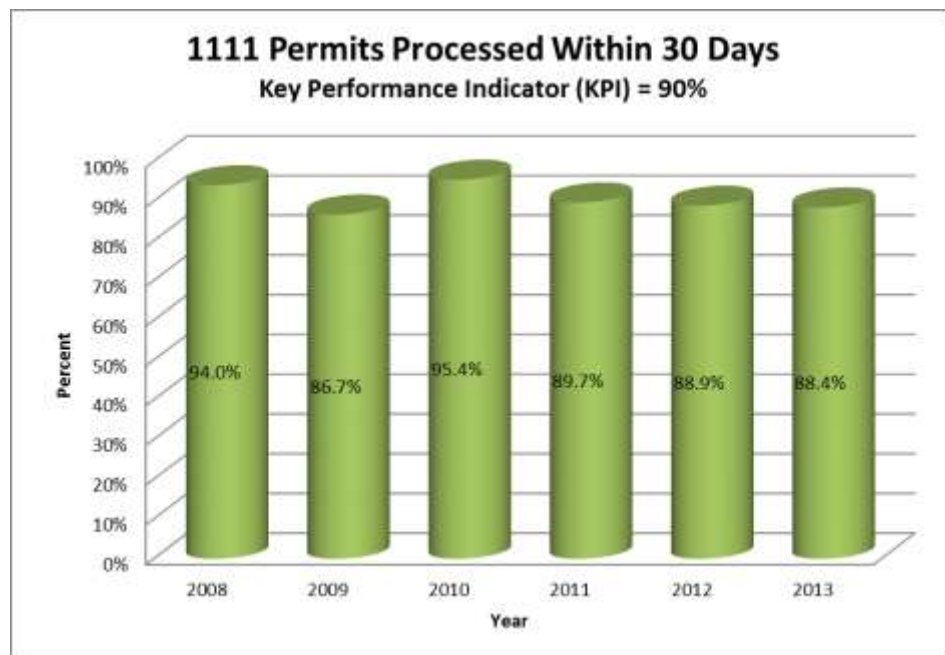
The final day included a lively open discussion on emergency procedures, which was well received since most of the northeast had been impacted by recent storm events. We were lucky enough to have an extensive FHWA attendance including John Turpin from the FHWA Washington D.C office, Michele Palicka from the FHWA Resource Center located in Georgia as well as FHWA Right of Way

Key Performance Indicators

As a part of the Program Development Division Quality Doctrine, the Right of Way Section has three key performance indicators identified:

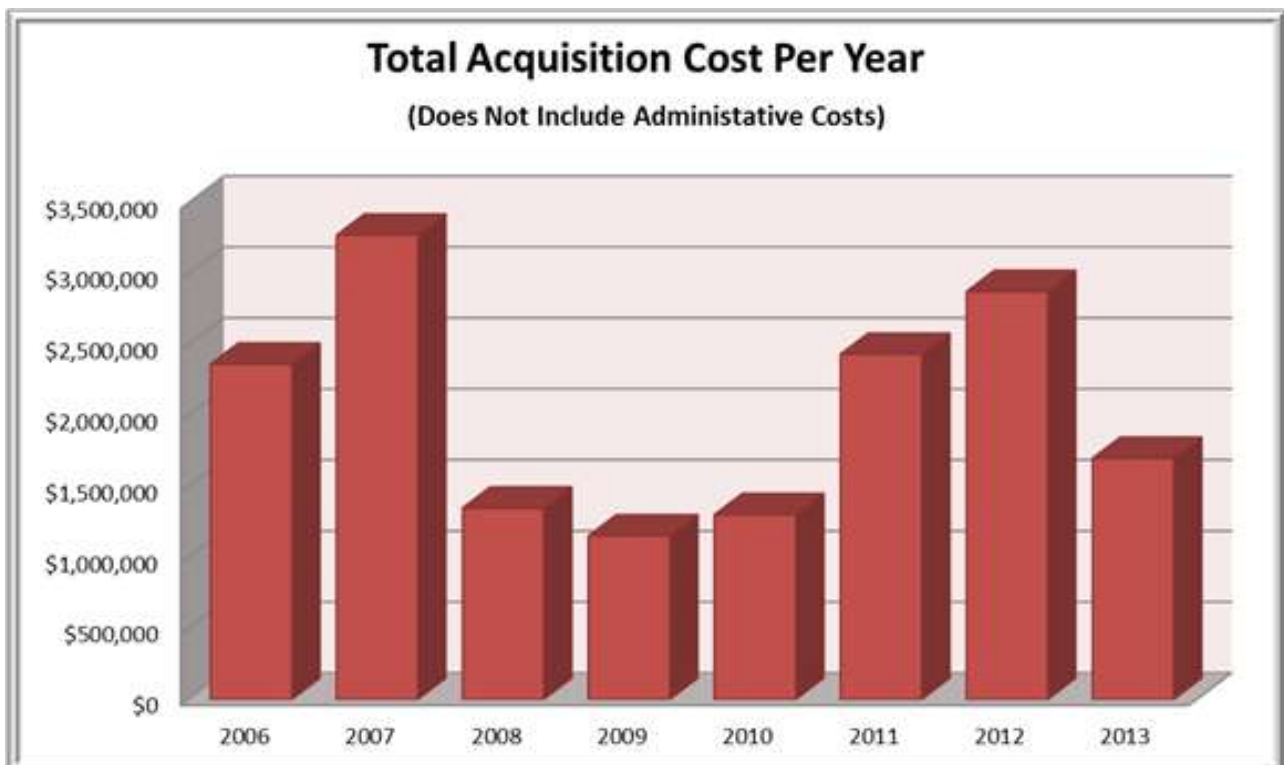
- 90% of completed (approved or denied) 1111 permits will be processed within 30 days of receiving an application (results seen below).
- Deliver a Right of Way Certificate within 30 days of a vetted project schedule.
- Deliver a Right of Way Certificate with a final cost, not including the cost of appeals, within 10% of Right of Way's preliminary cost estimate.

The tools and data were not available at the time this report was produced to report on the Right of Way certificate delivery and the Right of Way cost estimate KPI's. We anticipate reporting out on these throughout and at the end of 2014.



Section Management

During 2013, the Right of Way Section acquired property and property rights totaling over \$1.7 million. This does not include any administration cost. These acquisitions were spread over 42 projects and impacted over 90 property owners. Comparison with previous years is shown in the graph below.



Our negotiation efforts this year took 80+ days on average, which is high but greatly reduces our condemnation rate that came in around 3%. Over the next year, we will focus on and anticipate the average days to negotiate to be reduced and the condemnation rate to increase slightly.

Our property valuations are split between formal appraisals and waiver valuations (low value and uncomplicated). This year appraisals accounted for 24% and waiver valuations counted for 76% of valuation. Of the 76% of waiver valuations, 85% of those were less than or equal to \$10,000. The maximum limit for waivers is \$25,000.

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Section Statistics

